

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 7184

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, SY (WHITSITT, SAMUEL PORTER)

SUBJECT: W/ W: WHITSITT DEPARTS SYRIA

REF: BEIRUT 7129

1. HEAD USINT DAMASCUS CARDILLI ADVISED US JUNE 18 THAT WHITSITT LEFT BEHIND, AS EXCESS BAGGAGE, TYPEWRITER, CONSIDERABLE BOOKS AND OTHER PERSONAL ITEMS. CARDILLI WILL BRING THEM TO BEIRUT THIS WEEK FOR SAFE KEEPING. HE ALSO CASHED IN WHITSITT'S DAMASCUS- MUNICH AIR TICKET FOR 600 SYRIAN POUNDS (\$179.00). DEPT REQUESTED ASCERTAIN FROM SAMEUL WHAT DISPOSITION HE WANTS MADE OF HIS EFFECTS.

2. CARDILLI OVER PHONE VOLUNTEERED THAT WHEN HE SAW WHITSITT FOR FIRST TIME JUNE 17, WHITSITT WAS IN GOOD PHYSICAL SHAPE BUT STATED HE HAD SUFFERED IN PRISON. HE BALKED AT RETURNING TO US, PREFERRING TO GO INSTEAD TO MUNICH, BUT CARDILLI CONVINCED HIM OF WISDOM REJOINING FAMILY.

3. AS BACKGROUND ON SYRIAN DECISION DROP ESPIONAGE CHARGES AGAINST WHITSITT, CARDILLI ADVISED FOLLOWING BY LETTER JUNE 15;

4. ON JUNE 14, SARG MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS SENT
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" VERY CONFIDENTIAL AND URGENT" NOTE TO USINT ADVISING THAT PUBLIC PROSECUTOR GENERAL OF HIGH STATE SECURITY COURT HAD INFORMED FOREIGN OFFICE THAT COURT DECIDED NOT TO PROSECUTE WHITSITT FOR SPYING SINCE THERE WAS " NO PROOF". IF FURTHER ADVISED THAT HE WOULD BE DEPORTED IMMEDIATELY IF HE WAS " NOT ACCUSED OF ANY OTHER CRIME".

5. IN FACT, CARDILLI HAD RECIVED ADVANCE NOTICE JUNE 13 OF SARG' S DECISION FROM EXAMINING MAGISTRATE DAHER. CARDILLI STATED THAT VARIOUS LETTERS RE SAMUEL' S POLITICAL TENDENCIES, INCLUDING THOSE FROM MISS INFANTOLINO, AN ITALIAN RESIDENT IN BEIRUT AND FRIEND OF SAMUEL' S, HAD BEEN VERY USEFUL IN MAGISTRATE' S FINAL DECISION.

6. ITALIAN AMBASSADOR DAMASCUS AND CARDILLI CONSIDER THIS CASE AS GOOD EXAMPLE OF NEED AVOID ANY ACTION WHICH WOULD FORCE SYRIANS TO PRESS CHARGES AGAINST ARRESTED AMERICANS. HE EMPHASIZED THAT MAGISTRATE DAHER MADE IT CLEAR THAT WHITSITT' S RELEASE WAS " ADDITIONAL PROOF OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION BETWEEN ITALY AND SYRIA". HE CONCLUDED LETTER THAT PREVIOUS DEMARCHE TO SYRIAN MAGISTRATE IN WHICH HE ADVISED OF ITALY' S HUMANITARIAN GENEROSITY IN RELEASING TWO ARABS ACCUSED OF SABOTAGING EL AL PLANE CONTRIBUTED SUBSTANTIALY TO SYRIA' S FINAL DECISION TO RELEASE WHITSITT.

7 . WE HAVE EXPRESSED TO CARDILLI WHITSITT' S FAMILY' S AND THE DEPT' S APPRECIATEION FOR GOOD JOB HE DID, BUT RECOMMEND DEPT CONSIDER SENDING FONOFF ROME SOME COMMUNICATION WHICH, AMONG OTHER THINGS, WOULD SPELL OUT USG' S APPRECIATION OF CARDILLI' S DOGGEDNESS, IMAGINATION AND SKILLFUL DIPLOMACY EFFORTS ON THE WHITSITT CASE TO BRING IT TO THIS SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION.
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